

News from Ed Markey

United States Congress

Massachusetts Seventh District

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REP. MARKEY TO BUSH ADMINISTRATION: ‘WHY HAS IT TAKEN SO LONG?’

Five Days After Hurricane Katrina Strikes, Americans Are Still Without Supplies

Washington, D.C. – Five days after Hurricane Katrina the residents of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and bordering states continue to be without water, shelter and food. Americans from across the country are asking difficult questions about the speed and coordination of relief efforts. Representative Edward J. Markey (D-MA), a senior Democrat on the Homeland Security Committee made the following statement responding to the response to these reports:

“Five days after Hurricane Katrina struck, the images and accounts from the area are heartbreaking: premature babies struggling to survive without medical care; elderly residents suffering under the intense heat; no food or water for days, which has resulted in many deaths, particularly among the aged and infirm. Conditions in the hurricane-ravaged areas are absolutely deplorable. They are shocking. They are tragic. And they are almost incomprehensible, given the greatness of our country and the vast resources of the Federal government. Even as Americans across the country mobilize to help the victims, they have many questions for their leaders. Americans want to know:

“How could our government have been so unprepared for this natural disaster?

“Why has it taken so long to provide food, water, medicine and other basic supplies to the victims?

“Would our government have been better prepared, if the hurricane had been a terrorist attack?

“There is no doubt that our first priority must be to help the victims and begin the process of rebuilding the great city of New Orleans and other areas devastated by the hurricane.

“But after we have taken care of this vital mission, we must have a full investigation into the lack of preparedness and response to Hurricane Katrina. Now is the time for rescue efforts and reconstruction. Soon, we must begin a full-scale investigation into the causes of the unacceptable lack of preparation and delay of rescue efforts.

“The people of New Orleans – and Americans across the country – need to know how this debacle happened. Not only to help understand the current crisis, but to avoid a potential disaster in the future.”

A New Orleans Times-Picayune report from June 2002 stated: “Without extraordinary measures, key ports, oil and gas production, one of the nation’s most important fisheries, the unique bayou culture, the historic French Quarter and more are at risk of being swept away in a catastrophic hurricane...” This report was part of a special 5-part series in the Times-Picayune called “Washed Away”. The series also highlighted that the Southeast Louisiana Urban Flood Control Project (SELA) authorized by Congress was woefully under funded and \$250 million in other crucial levee building projects, conducted by the Army Corps of Engineers, remain unfinished.

For more information on how to help the victims of Hurricane Katrina check out Representative Markey’s website at <http://www.house.gov/markey/>